

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 10512

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TAGS: UNCTAD, TECH

SUBJECT: UNCTAD SECRETARIAT PLANNING AMBITIOUS TRANSFER
OF TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM FOR UNCTAD V AND BEYOND

1. IN A RECENT BRIEFING TO GROUP B GENEVA REPS ON PLAN-
NING FOR UNCTAD V, SURENDRA PATEL, DIRECTOR OF UNCTAD'S
TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY DIVISION, INDICATED PLANS FOR
PROMOTING A MAJOR RESOLUTION AT UNCTAD V TO ESTABLISH A
GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM AIMED AT TECHNOLOGICAL TRANS-
FORMATION OF THE LDCS AND QUOTE THE EMERGENCE OF
NEW CENTERS OF INDUSTRIAL POWER UNQUOTE. DESCRIBING THIS
INITIATIVE IN VERY GENERAL TERMS, PATEL EXPRESSED HOPE
THAT A TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE AT UNCTAD V WOULD LAY THE
GROUND-WORK FOR THE UN CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECH-
NOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (UNCSTD), THE NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT,
THE NEXT UNIDO CONFERENCE, AND THE IDS FOR THE 1980'S.
WHILE PATEL HAS NOT YET REVEALED EXACTLY HOW HE HOPES TO
ESTABLISH A QUOTE NEW WORLD TECHNOLOGICAL ORDER UNQUOTE,
HE OBVIOUSLY HOPES THAT STEPS WILL BE TAKEN AT UNCTAD V
TO GIVE UNCTAD A LEADING ROLE IN THE TECHNOLOGY FIELD AND
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TO EXERT A MAJOR INFLUENCE ON THE UNCSTD AND OTHER FUTURE
UN ACTIVITIES RELATED TO TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT.

2. IN THE B GROUP MEETING, PATEL ALSO MENTIONED THE FOL-
LOWING SUBJECTS AS POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR UNCTAD V: (A)
REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN BOTH THE UNCTAD NEGOTIATIONS ON A
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND ONGOING WIPO

EFFORTS TO REVISE THE PARIS CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY; (B) A POSSIBLE INITIATIVE ON REVERSE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY (BRAIN DRAIN); AND (C) REVIEW OF UNCTAD ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP REGIONAL TECHNOLOGY CENTERS AND A TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE. WITH RESPECT TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND THE INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY CONVENTION, PATEL EXPRESSED HOPE THAT PROGRESS CAN BE MADE IN BOTH AREAS IN COMING MONTHS SO THAT UNCTAD V COULD BE LARGELY A SELF-CONGRATULATORY SESSION. HE WARNED, HOWEVER, THAT SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS IN EITHER AREA COULD QUOTE CAST A SHADOW ON MANILA UNQUOTE. ADMITTING UNCERTAINTY AS TO HOW CONCRETE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY AGENDA ITEMS FOR UNCTAD V COULD BE DEVELOPED BY THE TIME OF THE AUGUST-SEPTEMBER TDB, PATEL INDICATED THAT HE WAS REALLY AIMING AT OUTLINING PLANS FOR MANILA AT THE DECEMBER 4-15 MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY. (THIS WILL ALSO ENABLE PATEL TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE RESULTS OF THE OCTOBER/NOVEMBER NEGOTIATING CONFERENCE ON THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY CODE).

3. COMMENT: PATEL'S PLANS FOR A GRANDIOSE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION SCHEME, AS WELL AS EXISTING PROGRAMS IN HIS DIVISION OBVIOUSLY INVOLVE A HIGH DEGREE OF EMPIRE BUILDING COMBINED WITH EFFORTS TO ADVANCE HIS IDEOLOGICAL APPROACH IN THE THIRD WORLD. MISSION IS AWARE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT PATEL HOPES TO ESTABLISH A COMPLAINT CENTER

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IN UNCTAD TO ENABLE LDCS TO LODGE COMPLAINTS AGAINST TECHNOLOGY SUPPLIERS WHICH DO NOT ABIDE BY PROVISIONS OF THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY CODE. (HE MIGHT SEEK AGREEMENT AT UNCTAD V TO ESTABLISH SUCH A CENTER). PATEL'S AMBITIONS, FURTHERMORE, ARE NOT RESTRICTED BY THE MANDATE OF UNCTAD, AS HE IS CONTINUING TO TRY TO WREST RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE "BRAIN DRAIN" ISSUE AWAY FROM THE CENTRAL UN SECRETARIAT AND TO INFLUENCE ONGOING EFFORTS IN WIPO TO REVISE THE INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY CONVENTION. HE ALSO UNDOUBTEDLY WILL TRY TO INFLUENCE G-77 POSITIONS AT THE UNCSTD. SINCE TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IS LIKELY TO BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT TO THE LDCS IN FUTURE YEARS, WE MUST ENSURE THAT ALL TECHNOLOGY-RELATED ISSUES ARE HANDLED EFFECTIVELY AND PROPERLY COORDINATED AMONG INDIVIDUAL FORA AND THE CENTRAL UN SECRETARIAT. IF--AT UNCTAD V--WE CAN POINT OUT THAT OTHER UN BODIES ARE EFFECTIVELY DEALING WITH TECHNOLOGY-RELATED ISSUES AND IF PREPARATIONS FOR UNCSTD ARE WELL IN HAND, WE WILL BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO THWART PATEL'S EFFORTS TO MAKE UNCTAD THE LEADING FORUM IN THIS FIELD--WHICH IS CLEARLY NOT IN OUR INTERESTS AS LONG AS HE IS IN CHARGE OF THE UNCTAD TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY DIVISION. VANDEN HEUVEL

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